



## Tops in Tourism

Travel Montana's web program was selected for a "Best Practices in Tourism" award by Georgia Tech University's Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS). Travel Montana was recognized for its excellence in web marketing.

"As state tourism websites increasingly integrate service and retail sales, privacy and confidentiality should assume even greater importance. Travel Montana is a best practice selection in web marketing because of its extensive privacy and confidentiality statement on its web site," explained Dr. Rich Harrill, Senior Business Associate at Georgia Tech University's Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers. "The agency is also a leader in web marketing because it has created several 'niche' sites in addition to its main site, visitmt.com. These niche sites include a Lewis and Clark site and a children's site."

The web program will be profiled in a new TRACS guide for tourism-related agencies, industries, and organizations. The publication will bridge gaps in information and improve methods in the expanding worldwide tourism industry. The first edition of TRACS' Best Practices guidebook is scheduled to appear this fall.

"Travel Montana's electronic marketing department has strived to be innova-

tive and develop websites that provide our visitors with the information they need to choose Montana as their travel destination. We are proud that our efforts have been recognized," said Corrie Hahn, Electronic Marketing Manager.

Travel Montana websites hosted a record number 2.7 million visitors in 2001. This is a 12% increase from 2000.

Other "Best Practices in Tourism" recognition was presented in the areas of research, funding, professional development, information dissemination and tourism advocacy.

## Whitefish Lassos the International Visitor

Whitefish, Montana hosted a record number of attendees at the recent Rocky Mountain International (RMI) Round Up, April 25-27. Eighty-six tourism suppliers touted their products to five domestic tour receptive operators and 23 international tour operators from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

According to Travel Montana's Group and Overseas Marketing Manager, Pam Gosink, the Whitefish community did an outstanding job of hosting, sponsoring and coordinating the three-day event. The operators were taken on a Fam tour that

showcased Glacier National Park, West Glacier and lunch at the Belton Chalet. Both winter and summer activities were "staged" so the operators could get the full insight on what recreational activities were available. Other highlights included a gondola ride and reception at the Summit House at Big Mountain, hosted dinners at various restaurants in Whitefish, and the group were the honored guests at a rough stock rodeo at the grand opening of the Flathead Valley's new indoor arena, Majestic Valley. Leads from the Round Up can be accessed on Travel Montana's Intranet site, [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us), under Our Programs, then Overseas. These leads are in a restricted area and the password is "overseas." Next year's RMI Round Up will be hosted by South Dakota. Location and dates are yet to be determined.

## All Aboard

Amtrak, Florentine Films and Dayton Duncan, The Lewis and Clark National Interpretive Center in Great Falls and Travel Montana have teamed up to produce a 34-minute feature video that will air this summer on Amtrak's "Empire Builder." The video highlights many regions of Montana, gives recognition to Amtrak's Empire Builder and includes a portion of the "Lewis and Clark - Corps of Discovery" film that is shown at the Lewis and Clark National Interpretive Center. The program will air twice daily east-bound upon departing Glacier National Park and westbound upon entering Montana from Ft. Union, North Dakota. The goal of the video is to stir interest and enthusiasm about Montana and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration, and entice Empire Builder guests to return to the state for a future trip.

## Did You Know?

- *Motorhome America Journal* magazine featured the Little Big Horn Days and the Little Big Horn National Monument in its May/June publication.
- The Missouri River Ranch in Bainville was highlighted in recent editions of *Trailer Life* and *Montana Living* magazines.
- *Traveller* magazine from the United Kingdom ran a story on Charlie Russell in a recent publication.
- *Backpacker* magazine selected the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness as one of its "Destination Guide 2002" undiscovered mountains.
- Glacier National Park's "red buses" have returned to the park for the 2002 summer season.
- St. Regis opened a new official Montana State Visitor Center May 1. And up on the U.S./Canadian border, Sweetgrass, Montana, offers visitors a new rest area.

## Save the Best for Last

Travel Montana's group travel program hosted a multi-state Lewis and Clark Fam tour for 22 group tour operators interested in planning future motor coach tours along the trail. The group began their journey in Portland, Oregon, and continued their trek through Washington and Idaho, ending their tour in the "Last Best Place." Montana stops included Missoula, Great Falls, Helena, Bozeman and Billings. For a list of the participants or for more information contact Group Travel Specialist Marlee Iverson at (406) 444-2654 or marlee@visitmt.com

## Call for Applications

### Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program

Application packets for the 2002 Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) Grants are now available from Travel Montana. \$150,000 is offered through this "bed tax" financed grant program for tourism-related "brick and mortar" projects.

Since its inception in 1995, TIIP Grants have invested over \$1.5 million into 31 tourism-related projects in 25 Montana communities. TIIP grants are for projects such as construction costs associated with building new and/or remodeling or preserving existing tourism and recreation attractions, historical sites and artifacts; costs associated with purchasing new and/or existing tourism and recreation attractions, historical sites and artifacts; and equipment purchased for specific tourism project operation.

The application packet includes TIIP guidelines, answers to frequently asked TIIP ques-

tions, a 2002 TIIP Grant Application form and a copy of Montana's 1998-2002 Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism. Everything except the strategic plan can be downloaded from Travel Montana's Intranet site: [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/newsandupdates](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/newsandupdates). Go to the applications, regulations and forms section. Printed copies of the strategic plan and the full application packet are also available by contacting Travel Montana at (406) 444-2654, fax 444-1800, or email [victor@visitmt.com](mailto:victor@visitmt.com). Travel Montana must receive the application by 5 p.m., August 1, 2002.

## Community Tourism Assessment Program; Urban Areas Invited to Apply

Montana communities interested in assessing their tourism potential and identifying feasible projects that can strengthen the role of tourism in their area are invited to apply for the 2002/2003 session of the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP).

Three communities will be selected for the upcoming session of the program. Two CTAP participation slots will be reserved for rural communities (those less than 15,000 population) and one slot is reserved for an urban community. The final mix of urban and rural communities participating in the program will depend on the number of applications.

CTAP is an 8-month "self help" program offered to Montana communities by MSU Extension, Travel Montana and the University of Montana's Travel Research Program. Local community action committees use the process

and its facilitation services to analyze local resident attitudes about and interest in tourism, their community's tourism potential, gaps in visitor services, and the identification of affordable projects or actions that could strengthen the role of tourism in the local economy.

CTAP guidelines and applications are available on Travel Montana's Intranet site [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/newsandupdates](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/newsandupdates) under the applications, regulations and forms section or call Travel Montana at (406) 444-2654. Deadline for applications are due in Travel Montana's offices by 5 p.m., August 1, 2002.

Participating communities will be selected by the middle of August and the first CTAP meeting will be held in September 2002. For more information, contact Travel Montana's Victor Bjornberg at (406) 444-4366 or email: [victor@visitmt.com](mailto:victor@visitmt.com).

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.*

## Calendar of Events

### June

- 16-21 "Culture Runs Through It" media tour—Glacier Country
- 19-23 "Pedaling Lewis and Clark" media tour—Russell Country
- 23-30 Lewis & Clark multi-tourism region media tour—Glacier, Gold West, Yellowstone and Russell Countries

### July

- 11-16 "Sitting Bull's Last Days of Freedom" media tour—Missouri River Country

*For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: [travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us).*



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